THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method of providing constraints for digital images and communications in medicine, the method comprising the steps of:

   placing declarative constraint information within a declarative data block describing a document;

   allowing the declarative constraint information to be processed as declarative data when the document is accessed.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the document is an electronic document.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the constraints are in DICOM SR format.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the declarative data block is in Extensible Markup Language (XML).

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the constraint provided is that an element be present.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the constraint provided is that an element be of a specified element type.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the constraint provided is that two or more elements be in a specific sequence.

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8.   A method of providing DICOM SR constraints within an XML document, the method comprising the steps of:

creating an XML document containing DICOM SR constraints using declarative language;

allowing a user to access the XML document.

9.   A system for specifying constraints for digital images and communications in medicine, the system comprising:

a memory with a document in electronic form with declarative constraint instructions;

a computer processor operatively coupled with the memory and a display device, the processor configured to

execute declarative constraint instructions in the document.

display the document on the display device.

10.   The system of claim 9, wherein the processor is further configured to store a declarative data block describing the document including the declarative constraint instructions to a data storage operated by the processor.

11.   The system of claim 9, wherein the declarative constraint instructions are in DICOM SR format.

12.   The system of claim 9, wherein the document is in Extensible Markup Language (XML).

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13.   The system of claim 9, wherein the constraint is that an element be present.

14.   The system of claim 9, wherein the constraint is that an element be of a specified element type.

15.   The system of claim 1, wherein the constraint is that two or more elements be in a specific sequence.